Pamph.
BAP
A588
8.CP 25789

No. 8.

PROPERTY OF
BINGHAM
REC. APR 18
LIBRARY

A CHINAMAN IN SEARCH OF BAPTISM.

Rev. Mr. Angier, of Meridian, N. Y. delivered an address on the following resolution :—

Resolved, That those who oppose a revision of the English Scriptures, to be consistent, ought to be satisfied with the renderings of the common version, without so frequent recurrence to the original.

This resolution, Mr. President, does not apply to those who oppose the Bible Union as such, for there are very many who are with us in the full belief that every word that proceedeth out of the month of God, shall be made as plain as possible to the common reader, and that all false translations of the original text should be reproved.

Such may honestly oppose this society, believing that its formation was premature and perhaps ungenerous in embracing the whole world for its field, while another society embraced the whole world, excepting, perhaps, our own language.

Nor does it allude to those who for various reasons, have been prejudiced against this union, as captious and unchristian in spirit. All these will be with us when our intentions and objects shall be better known, and in these two classes we may number a majority of our opponents.

But there are some claiming to be Baptists who maintain that the Bible needs no amendments, or if needed, such corrections would do more hurt than good—that many words heretofore declared to be merely transferred; done to please a particular denomination with a king at its head—are now real translations, the best the world ever saw or ever will see. They claim that the "Old Fashioned Bible" without "note or comment," should remain untouched, at least for this age, and so far as we learn from them, for ages yet unborn.

To such, the resolution refers; and, Mr. President, why ought not such persons to be content with the Bible as it is? If it is to be circulated "without note or comment," why should it not be *preached from* "without note or comment?"

Why stop to explain terms by recurring to the original, as probably every one of this class would do in preaching from a large class of texts, containing obsolete and untranslated words?

Who that means to be faithful to his God would preach from 1 Thess., 4. 15, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain to the coming of Christ shall not prevent them *which are asleep*," without explaining the term "prevent"?

Or from 1 Cor. 16, 22—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *anathema maranatha*," without recourse to the original? Or from "God shall destroy all them that speak leasing"—without some "notes or comments?" Or from Mat. 28, 19—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," without commenting upon the terms "teach" and "*baptizing?*" and this too from the original?

It may be said that references may be had in each case to the dictionaries of our own language. But who would trust such dictionaries either in the first of last passage named?

What would "Webster" say was the meaning of the term "prevent?" He will tell you it means "to hinder, stop, or interrupt the approach, access, or performance of a thing."

The first passage named, with this definition, would read, "We shall not *stop or hinder*, (the rising) of them which are asleep," (dead.)

Is there a conscientious minister of any denomination, who would allow his hearers to obtain such a meaning? Not one.

Suppose, Mr. President, that one of these brethren, who oppose a revision of the English Scriptures and consequently oppose this society, should chance to meet one of the thousand of Chinamen now coming to our shores, and should fall into conversation with him on the subject of religion. The Chinaman inquires, Is the book you call the Bible a true book?

Minister—Most certainly. It is the book of the great God to teach us our duty and our future destiny.

C.—Was it originally written in English?

M.—No. It was written in Hebrew and Greek. The Old Testament in the former and the New Testament in the latter.

C.—Is the translation from these original languages correct?

M.—Very; the most correct translation ever made. You can safely trust it.

C.—You have an ordinance called baptism, have you not? Are the words "baptize" and "baptism" correct translations?

M.—Certainly. These are the best words that could be used, and the substitution of any other would be "just cause of alarm."

After a while, the Chinaman is converted, and as he supposes, is baptized.

The minister meets him soon after, to whom the Chinaman relates his experience, giving the most satisfactory evidence that he is a true disciple of Christ.

The minister, as every Baptist should do, inquires if he has been baptized?

C.—Replies—Oh, certainly, I attended to that as soon as I could learn how.

M.—Well, how were you baptized?

C.—Why, I went down into the water and the minister washed my feet to be sure.

M.—But where did you get such an idea of baptism as that?

C.—Get it from! I got it from the New Testament *and* Johnson's Dictionary. After being converted I wished to obey Christ, my adorable Redeemer, just as he required; so I procured the dictionary and found the term "Baptism" thus defined: "An external ablution of the body, with a certain form of words used in Christian churches." I found from Acts 8: 38, that those who were baptized, went down into the water;" and then turned to John 13: 10, and learned, that "he that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." So my priest led me down into the water, and washed my feet in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as directed in Matthew. I was right, was I not?

M.—Right! It was the strangest thing I ever heard of. You must consult Webster instead of Johnson; he is our standard authority; and you will see your error, for I still claim that "baptize" is an *English word.*

After a while they meet again and the Chinaman, with much joy, remarks to the minister that he had dicovered his mistake, and had speedily been baptized correctly

M.—Well, and how was it performed this time?

C.—Oh, I had some *water sprinkled in my face* in the name of the Trinity.

M.—Why that was not half so near right as before. I am surprised.

C.—But I consulted "Webster," and he thus defines the word "baptize:"

"To administer the sacrament of baptism; to christen." By some denominations of Christians, he says, baptism is performed by plunging or immersing the whole body in water. More generally, the ceremony is performed by sprinkling water on the face of a person. So, you see, I have done as is the more general meaning of the word. This must be right, of course.

M.—Not at all. I do not admit that you have been baptized yet. You must be immersed before you can be baptized.

C.—How so? You said that Webster was the standard and I have certainly followed him. Will it not answer? He says this is the *more general* way, and if a majority of enlightened American Christians so construe the word baptize, it must be correct.

M.—No, nothing but immersion will answer. The word baptize is from Baptizo, and means to dip, to plunge or immerse.

C.—How can this be shown? Webster says no such thing.

M.—By all the GREEK lexicons in use as text-books, in all the colleges in Europe and America, and probably in the entire world.

C.—Then I must study Greek in order to understand the English Bible—must I?

M.—Yes. It is very important to understand the Greek, if we would rightly understand the Bible, and especially the ordinance of baptism.

C.—But you told me your Bible was a correct translation into English, and now you discard your standard dictionaries and cling to the Greek. I have made two mistakes already for want of a correct translation, and must wait now till I can learn the Greek, in order to understand the English Bible.

But you say immerse is the true meaning, and now you require me to be immersed before you receive me into your church, or to your communion. Why do you wish people to be honestly deceived, as I have been? Why not put the word "immerse" in place of "baptize," and then it would speak for itself?

M.—The time has not yet come, I think.

C.—Time not come! when multitudes are flocking to your shores from all parts of the world. They come and learn your language, read your Bible and return home. The English language is now and always will be the most important language of the globe. Better that any other Bible should be wrong than the English. By the English Bible the world is to learn of Christ and his ordinances. Why don't you correct these errors, so that a foreigner unacquainted with the Greek, can know what your Bible means as soon as he learns the English?

M.—We should be called sectarian if we did, and should be reproached by many who practice sprinkling.

C.—And does your Bible allow you to shrink from doing right for fear of reproach? Are all Baptists of your opinion?

M.—Not exactly. Some have already formed a society to translate every word into plain English. They are determined to give up this good word *baptize* and substitute *immerse* in its place. But I cannot go with them. They did not start right, and then those who practice sprinkling won't have such a Bible.

C.—If there are any who are trying to make this right, I will go with them, and use my influence, that no other countryman of mine shall be deceived as I have been. If your English dictionaries fail to give the true meaning of Greek terms, employed in the Bibles, then let Bibles be corrected by the true import of the Greek, so that a foreigner learning your language, may know what God requires of man! Never again call baptize an English word, until it can be correctly defined by an English dictionary. Don't send us foreigners to the Greek, in order to know the English.

Mr. President, is not this common sense, and are not all foreigners liable to be deceived just as in the case supposed?

But this is not all. Where is the Baptist that preaches a sermon on baptism, without telling his congregation that *baptize* means to *immerse*, and in proof of this has recourse to the Greek text? Why run to the Greek if the English is right? Who will trust Johnson, or Walker, or Todd, or even our standard Webster?

And then again, why are our commentaries so full of references to the Greek, if the English is right? Take Adam Clark as an example. There is scarcely a verse in the New Testament which he has not explained by recourse to the Greek text, and not unfrequently giving shades of meaning quite at variance with the common English version.

Instance an example, also from the comprehensive commentary by J. A. Warne, on Matthew, 3d chap. "Baptism," he says, "is still baptism, under whatever dispensation it is practiced—i. e. *immersion* is immersion, and *immersion* is the translation of the noun, as *to immerse* is that of the verb (meaning the Greek noun and verb,) and had not the instructions of our translators relative to the rendering to be given to certain ecclesiastical words fettered them, they would in all probability have *translated* these words, instead of merely *transferring* them."

Here is our own American commentator referring to the Greek for his definition of baptism. And here too, is a flat contradiction of all modern Baptists who claim that "baptize" is a real *translation* of the original. I cannot forbear alluding to the late Dr. Carson, of whom the world might have been proud.

In his instruction to his pupils, we are told by his biographer that he often said "the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, is of infinite importance to ministers of the Gospel. * * * And although he who is constantly tampering with the good English Bible is but a bungling workman, still I would strongly advise you never to preach from a text until you have first examined it in the original."

And how strongly he insists on *immersion* as the true meaning of *baptismos*, all of us know who have read his irrefutable work on baptism. And yet, it is given as the opinion of his biographer that he would not have consented to engage in the present enterprise of translating the *untranslated* words of our Bible. So we have, in this great and good man, the inconsistency of sending his pupils to ancient languages, in order to understand and defend the English Bible. Unwilling to trust the English, he would have constant recourse to the Greek.

This the common people cannot do. They must walk in darkness so far as the ordinances are concerned, or trust to those, the Doctor was pleased to call "bungling workmen."

No; let workmen be employed speedily before the error is worse, who shall make a business of rectfying errors, and present us with a pure translation in the plainest possible manner of every word in the great and blessed Book of God.

And if a portion, perhaps a majority of the great baptist family, stand aloof and form affinity with those who have always opposed the true meaning of terms employed by Christ to express his own ordinances, on them rest the responsibility.

Let it be ours to aid in giving the Bible in plain English, so that no man need be under the necessity of referring to the Greek or Hebrew, to understand an English Bible.